



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

Monthly Meeting: ~~Wednesday, 11th, 2021~~ **Cancelled**
Annual Potluck Picnic-Saturday, August 21st 1:00 PM

Potluck Picnic

It's been a very long time coming but we are pleased to announce that the Annual August EBBS Potluck Picnic will once again be at the home of Michael Jensen-Akula. Michael and Marilyn have a beautiful view of the San Francisco Bay and plenty of rolling landscape for roaming around and visiting with members at a socially acceptable distance. As in 2019, members and their significant other are welcome to bring a favorite tree for sharing at the picnic.



The picnic will begin at 1:00 PM and last until sunset. Members are requested to bring a dish as identified in the following list:

- Appetizer - Last name A-G
- Entrée - Last name H-L
- Side dish or salad - Last name M-R
- Dessert - Last name S-Z

Be sure to bring utensils required for serving your contribution. The club will provide wine, beer and soft drinks. Also, the Oakland hills can occasionally be a bit

cool and breezy so dress in layers. Hats and sun screen are also a good idea. Masks will be optional, however if you are unvaccinated, we recommend that you wear one and to be considerate, all members should wear masks while in the house.

Michael lives just off highway 24. Take the Broadway exit South, then turn onto Ocean View Drive.

The address is: 6143 Ocean View Dr. Oakland

July Meeting

By: Tom Fedor

Growing up in Colorado, Ryan Neil began studying bonsai at the tender age of fourteen. After earning his horticulture degree at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, he apprenticed with Mr. Masahiko Kimura for six years in Japan. He started his own garden, Bonsai Mirai, near Portland, Oregon, in 2010. A talented educator, Ryan's work at Bonsai Mirai has acquired a huge cohort of bonsai students from all over.

This evening, in collaboration with the Bosai Society of San Francisco, we were treated to Ryan's styling (Live! Before our very eyes!) a collected Sierra juniper. He illustrated his work with a verbal river of information about his thoughts regarding the tree's design in the context of, well, everything. His flow was interrupted from time to time by our questions, which were all good ones, invited whenever Ryan turned his hands to what he called the "blue collar" work on the tree which, very apparently, can be done by trained hands (his, anyway) while higher processes work the verbal parts.

Perhaps his dedicated followers will have known this already, but your humble correspondent was struck by

Ryan having taken much of his feeling for design from likening bonsai form to the human form, acknowledging Mr. Kimura's inspiration for this insight.



To a question about aftercare for tonight's botanical victim, Ryan explained that full sun is recommended, at least in his neck of the woods and most of the cooler Bay Area parts, although his viewers tuning in from Livermore or Antioch or some such summer-hot climate may find some shade to be useful. Another question: Why are Sierra junipers blue? Well, they're not, really, until you bring them down from their mountain home to places like the Bay Area. Apparently, the same bluing could be achieved by applying horticultural oil. Something to do with sunlight and cuticles. I wonder if it would work on mine, hmm. And pinching? Never EVER pinch a juniper; it will have its revenge.



And perhaps I heard, near the end of the evening, Ryan discussing the effect of alcohol on bonsai and particularly the effect of the ethyl kind on bonsai practitioners. I wish I'd paid more attention, oh well. Many thanks to Ryan and our West Bay neighbors for a most engrossing, engaging and egregiously excellent evening.

Pyracantha

By: Tom Colby

Pyracantha bonsai are not seen that often and they deserve more recognition as worthy candidates for bonsai trees. First, let's consider a bit about Pyracantha. There are seven members of the Pyracantha genus, and their range extends from southeastern Europe to Asia. The most common locally seen species is *P. coccinea* which hails from southeastern Europe.

Each spring these plants produce an abundance of small white flowers, followed by a heavy crop of red berries in the fall. The display of berries is what makes Pyracantha especially attractive as a candidate for bonsai.



Pyracantha has been in cultivation for a very long time, and as a result, there are many named selections available. Also *P. coccinea* has been hybridized with the other species and, again, many named varieties are available. The available varieties of Pyracantha differ in size of leaf, plant growth, and berry color. There are lots of varieties to choose from.

Another species in cultivation is *P. angustifolia*, native to western China. It differs from *P. coccinea* by having yellow berries and slightly fuzzy leaves. This form seems not to be readily available from local nurseries, perhaps because it is a bit sensitive to cold. It is hardy only to freezing, and not to below freezing temperatures. The yellow berries make it worth seeking out from nursery stocks.

The most obvious thing that you see (or feel) with Pyracantha is that they have formidable thorns. You can make life with Pyracantha more pleasant by cutting the tips of the thorns to remove the sharp points. Do not totally remove the thorns because at the base of each thorn is a flowering bud.



Pyracanthas are lush growers and as a result, can be aggressively pruned in the summer and fall by cutting branches back to one or two nodes. Some growers remove all flower buds every other year to allow the tree to direct energy only on the growth of the trunk and branches. Pyracanthas can be wired, but require care and a gentle hand. Young branches can be moved but are brittle, so care is required to prevent breakage. Older branches quickly become quite stiff and can be moved only with difficulty. Because of the lush growth of Pyracanthas, it is no surprise that they can be defoliated without fear in June to increase ramification. The trees respond well to high nitrogen fertilizer applied in the spring and summer. Cuttings taken in late spring or early summer root readily.



A major issue with Pyracanthas as bonsai is that they resent disturbance and should be repotted every other year, or better, every three or even four years. Trees show their sentiments about being repotted by usually having a sparse crop of berries in the year that they are repotted. The plants expend a huge amount of energy producing berries, and some growers remove the flowers on recently repotted plants to allow the tree to recover. The minimal crop of berries that the plant produces after repotting indicates that the tree can adjust to the trauma of repotting on its own. As a side note, the literature on Pyracanthas allege that the berries are bitter when eaten out of hand, but when cooked can produce delicious jams and jetties. An additional culinary delight comes late in the season when the berries can become slightly fermented as they age. Birds, particularly robins, adore Pyracantha berries and, at this time, can show all the symptoms of being three sheets to the wind after eating them. So, there you have it. Pyracanthas as bonsai are well worth your interest. Between flowers and berries they produce a spectacular display through the year and, with a little care, are not that hard to grow.

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Water regularly. Don't over-water defoliated trees.
- Fertilizing – Continue regular feeding, but stop fertilizing decandled pines.
- Repotting – Not recommended at this time except for tropical and semi-tropical trees.
- Styling/Pruning – Avoid drastic pruning. Wire uprising branches on quince, ume, oaks, etc. Prune excessive growth on trees.
- Insect and disease control – Maintain defensive treatments for fungus. Watch for and treat insect infestations.

Refer to the EBBS Bonsai Seasonal guide for more information on care

Make your tree a Social Media Star! Our Facebook page is in need of member's trees to display. If interested in showing your tree, send a picture to EBBS_Distribution@Yahoo.com.

Each membership household, free of charge, may place a five-line ad related to bonsai in two newsletters each year. Please submit your ad by the preceding Monday of the month to appear in the next publication. Send your ad to EBBS_Distribution@yahoo.com.

Have an idea for an on-line meeting? You can contact any board member or send a note to EBBS_Distribution@Yahoo.com. All suggestions are welcome!

Bonsai for Beginner's is back!

Introduction to Bonsai (Bonsai for Beginners) is back on the 4th Sunday of each month from 1:00 – 3:00, excluding February and December. Sign up at Eastbaybonsai.org. Classes are held at the workshop in the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt.

Events by Others

October 2 and 3, 2021 Santa Nella, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF) will host the 2021 GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous. The event theme is "Bonsai Rendezvous." A two-day event for renewal and celebration for the love of bonsai. No registration fees. Open to the public. Free bonsai demonstrations both days. Free professional bonsai critiques, Bring Your Own Bonsai and Do It Yourself Bonsai settings. Vendors from Northern and Southern California in one huge location. There will be silent auctions for quality bonsai and related items. There will be no banquet dinners. Additional information and schedule of activities forthcoming shortly. Stay tuned to GSBF website. For further information or to volunteer in support of the event, contact Rich Guillen at richguillen@att.net or call 831-233-1612.

For Sale: Tools available by Ray Vickers-Taft (former EBBS member). Estimated at \$250, may sell for \$150. If interested, please contact Ray at wndwsillsorchids@aol.com or by phone 510-277-4200.



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East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2021

Regular Meetings: Second Wednesday, in person every month (except July, August and October) @ 7:30 pm.
Place: Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland. Visitor's welcome.

| <u>Meeting</u> | <u>Program</u> |
|----------------|---|
| Aug 2 | EBBS Board Meeting |
| Aug 21 | Annual Picnic |
| Aug 22 | Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Michael Jensen-Akula |
| Aug 30 | EBBS Board Meeting |
| Sept. 8 | Randall Lee – Rock plantings – In the Garden Center |
| Sept. 26 | Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – John Nackley/Bob Gould |
| Oct 4 | EBBS Board Meeting |
| Oct 9/10 | Annual Show (no monthly meeting) |
| Oct 24 | Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Tom Colby |
| Nov 1 | EBBS Board Meeting |
| Nov 10 | Monthly meeting – TBD |
| Nov 28 | Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Michael Jensen-Akula |
| Nov 29 | EBBS Board Meeting |
| Dec 8 | Holiday dinner |